

Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Council.

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday 5th March 2007

Present: Councillors Sayce, Chainey, Davison, Hall, Hedley, Martin, Porter, Wade, Mrs M Williams, Clerk

Also present: District Councillor Dale, Mrs H Compson, Hexham Courant, Mr Stuart Kay, Faber Maunsell, Mr Dryden

Apologies: Councillors Darren Levitt, Eileen Drew, Tracy Warhurst-Walker, District Councillor Mike Collins, County Councillor Ray Thompson.

Mrs Sayce opened the meeting by welcoming John Davison to his first meeting of the Parish Council.

06/92 New Tyne Crossing

Mrs Sayce welcomed Stuart Kay of Faber Maunsell, consultants for the County Council studying options for a new Tyne crossing in eastern Tynedale.

Mr Kay opened his remarks by setting the context for the study. He said that initially they had been asked to look at strengthening Wylam Bridge to enable a new parapet to be built.

He said that the present project was purely a feasibility study into options for Ovingham Bridge and stressed that the suggested routes were not cast in stone. He also advised that option 4 on the map had been added since the first letters of consultation had been issued. He said that realistically, there will be no changes for at least 10 years. There is an established evaluation process which feeds into a funding and scoring system and on completion of the evaluation the County will decide whether or not to submit a bid to build a new crossing. Once the evaluation process is complete it is hoped that the County will meeting the Parishes to explain the outcomes of the evaluation and their decision. It was noted that problems are easy to identify but solutions are more difficult. Following Mr Kay's initial remarks, a discussion ensued during which the following points were made.

Ovingham's problem is the traffic coming to and from Prudhoe through the village. There is also an element of school traffic to the two schools within the village and with children going to Prudhoe High School. The current bridge at Ovingham is reported to be structurally sound and if the traffic load over it was lightened it would probably last for some time.

Parish Councillors are particularly concerned to reduce the volume of heavy traffic using the A695 through Stocksfield and Mickley.

It was felt that from the point of view of Stocksfield options 2 and 4 were the most suitable. Options 2, 3 and 4 all meant steep gradients from Low Prudhoe to the A69. Option 3 is the least steep.

Could the County Council impose a weight limit on the A695 between Low Prudhoe and the A695/A68 roundabout? How can heavy traffic be persuaded not to use the A695 through Stocksfield.

There are opposing views as to the level of traffic generated when SCA development comes on stream. Faber Maunsell have not yet spoken to either SCA or Thompsons. It is important to discover the origins and destinations of journeys. To enable SCA, Thompsons and other businesses at Low Prudhoe to expand and prosper it was felt that Option 4 should be encouraged.

If no new river crossing is built how will the existing road network be managed. Everyone seems to be in favour of managing the network The Parish Council would like the traffic through Stocksfield to be managed and ideally redirected before it reaches Mickley and Stocksfield.

Had a route west of the existing Ovingham Bridge been considered – the comment was made that such a bridge would have to be very large because of the height of the land at this point.

Consideration has to be given to possible damage to the environment when deciding on which route to pursue.

What is the attitude of the Highways Agency?

In summary:

The issue for Broomley & Stocksfield Parish Council is the volume of HGVs on the A695 through Stocksfield.

The solution would be to restrict the HGVs through the village and provide an alternative route.

How could this restriction be enforced. There is a need to be realistic in suggesting solutions, and to be considerate of the needs of the businesses. Research should be undertaken to see how similar problems are tackled in other parts of the country.

Mr Kay was thanked for attending the meeting.

06/93 Declarations of Interest – None

06/94 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5th February 2007 were agreed, with one minor amendment, as a true record.

06/95 Matters Arising

Hexham Hospital – Mrs Drew had advised that she had visited patients at the Hospital and that there were no complaints. The biggest cause for concern is having to go elsewhere for treatment. Tynedale Council advised that they will not be holding a Parish Forum in the near future but that the matter will be put on the agenda of the next meeting. It was agreed to discuss this topic further at the April meeting of the Parish Council.

County Council Minerals Strategy – following press reports regarding identification of sites for opencast mining, concerns had been raised by residents. It was re-iterated that no planning applications had been received and that the developers were only identifying sites for inclusion in the Minerals Strategy.

06/96 Public Participation

Mr Dryden opened his remarks by thanking Mr Chainey for his help regarding the BOAT outside Apperley Farm. He said that people are still driving down this route. Mr Chainey advised that he had spoken to Alex Bell of the County Council who had confirmed that there is no right of access along the Apperley Track and that Orders are to be drawn up advising that there will be no vehicular access.

Mr Dryden advised that he had spent £400 filling the pot holes up to his drive way but had been advised that the County are to adopt the road but will not maintain it. He said that he had had no official notice from the County on this matter but had been told on 2nd March 2007 that the County are to survey the road, fill the potholes and dress the surface. He had asked the officer about the collapsed drain at the bottom of the road and was advised that although the drain had been damaged for several months County were allegedly unaware of it. He also asked when the County were to take away the rubbish off the road. It was agreed to contact the County to seek clarification on these issues.

06/97 Correspondence

Correspondence had been received from:

NSP – Releasing the strength of our communities – no comment

NALC – Invitation to Royal Garden Party – It was agreed to nominate Mrs Sayce.

NALC – Training etc. – noted

Dept. for Communities & Local Government – Revised Code of Conduct – no comment

Dept. for Communities & Local Government - Strengthening the role of local councillors – It was felt that the most important aspect was to listen to what Parish Councillors say and take note of their comments. Individuals were asked to respond but it was felt that the Parish Council should also respond as a body.

NTC – it was agreed to grant £25 in 07/08.

Selefest – it was agreed to grant £50

Community Council of Northumberland – Village of the Year – this matter to be discussed in April.

NALC – Review of Quality Town & Parish Council Scheme – it was felt that this scheme should be looked at again to see if the effort is worth the outcome.

Other correspondence was listed on the agenda and was noted.

06/98 Finance

The accounts for February had been circulated and were accepted.

It was agreed that in view of the impending retirement of several councillors, additional cheque signatories should be put in place.

Malcolm Chainey proposed and Marcia Hedley seconded that Ian Hall and Dave Porter be additional cheque signatories and it was agreed.

06/99 Brief Reports from Advisory Groups and Council Representatives

a) Sports Facilities Group

The MUGA Group AGM is set for Friday 9th March and will be followed by a meeting of the Sportsfield Management Group.

It was agreed to ask the Handyman to mend the fence of the Multisports Area.

b) Communication

NE 43 News – a draft had been circulated and councillors had made various suggestions which were noted.

AGM Report - a draft had been circulated and councillors had made various suggestions which were noted.

Website – Dave Porter urged councillors to continue to give him information for inclusion on the website. He said that in order for the website to be effective it was important to keep it in the public eye and to keep it fresh and up-to-date. He said he was about to create a play areas page. It was suggested that the County be asked to put information on the website about the Minerals Strategy – Anne Dale is to liaise with Dave Porter on this.

c) Council Representatives

Eastern Parishes Forum – Dave Porter had attended the most recent meeting to talk about websites. He said he felt it was a useful opportunity to meet and talk with representatives of other councils. There had been a discussion regarding funding a Clerk to the Forum for 8 days a year. It is also an opportunity to find out more about the work of Tynedale Community Partnership. It was felt that TCP was not good on feedback and it that we were currently unaware of who our representative on the TCP was. The next meeting of the Forum is on 15th May at Newton Community Hall. We need to continue to attend these meetings.

d) General Purposes

A meeting had been held with representatives of the Land Registry and this will be discussed at the next meeting of the Council.

e) Planning & Highways

The Planning Report had been circulated.

Parking at Birches Nook Road – it was hoped that once the necessary procedures had been completed the proposed restrictions would be put in place. A response is to be sent to Graham Ashley, a resident of Birches Nook Road on this issue.

Parking at the top of Painshawfield Road – the County is to be asked why no progress has been made on this issue. It was noted that the Highway Code specifically discusses parking on or near junctions.

f) Parish Plan

A meeting is to be held with Jane Hart of Community Action Northumberland and a report given at the April meeting.

g) Footpaths & Environment Group

A response has been drafted to the County on their Consultation on Rights of Way.

The next meeting of the Footpaths Group will be held on 16th April. John Davison was invited to attend. Malcolm Chainey said that he would be happy to continue to sit on the Footpaths Group but stressed the need for the Parish Council to formally appoint a representative. He said that there were still some rights of way issues outstanding which need the County to finalise. A query arose regarding the new footpath between Guessburn and the A695. Mr Chainey gave the background to the development of this path and it was agreed that the condition of the path should be monitored as it was felt that it could be eroded away.

UKWAS – Mr Chainey said that he was unable to discover any information about this but that it would be brought up at the Footpaths Group meeting.

It was noted that the snicket at the Batt House Road end of the footpath from Meadowfield Road was damaged and Tim Fish is to be asked about this.

h) Play Facilities Group

Mr Hall tabled the report of the Play Facilities Group. He said that we were now in a position to tell the County what we wished to do at Branch End this year. It was asked who is designing the ramp at the new entrance and he advised that Lyndsay Waugh is to provide a quantity survey.

i) Sensory Garden

Nothing to report

06/100 Other business

None

06/101 Date of Next Meeting:

Annual Parish Meeting – 23rd April

Local Council Elections – 3rd May

Annual General Meeting of the Parish Council – 14th May

The meeting closed at 10.00 p.m